

VZCZCXYZ0010  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #0232 0620932  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 030932Z MAR 09  
FM AIT TAIPEI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1039  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8985  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0435

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000232

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused March 3 news coverage on the continuing depreciation of the New Taiwan dollar against U.S. dollar, on the island's sagging economy, and on the debate over whether Taiwan should sign an Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with China. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" discussed the recent resumption of military talks between the United States and China and said "[T]he U.S. is growingly convinced that China's emergence as a military power is not a threat to American interests, but a stabilizing force in an uncertain world." An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," on the other hand, discussed the "controversial" appointment of Charles Freeman as the chairman of the U.S. National Intelligence Council. The article concluded that now is "too early to be overly alarmed by the appointment" as "despite Freeman's positions on Taiwan and China -- which are indeed worrying -- others in the US government will counterbalance him." End summary.

A) "U.S., PRC Hold Military Talks"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (3/3):

"... The resumption of military talks less than two months after President Bush left office demonstrates China's eagerness for a fresh start. Factors including the new Obama administration, the depth of the American financial crisis, China's increased confidence, and growing instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan have combined to produce the most frank and open talks in years. The PLA's main goal remains defending the position and interests of the Communist Party leadership, a purpose unaltered by the military's active new diplomacy and recent improvements in China's relationship with Taiwan.

"The U.S. is growingly convinced that China's emergence as a military power is not a threat to American interests, but a stabilizing force in an uncertain world. For many years, American officials, and especially the military, have expressed concern that China is buying weapons systems specifically designed to deny American access to the region should there be a conflict over Taiwan. Now there is little concern that China can threaten the continental United States, and great efforts have been made to make China a partner in regional peace."

B) "Obama's NIC Chief Causes a Stir"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (3/3):

"The appointment by the administration of US President Barack Obama of Charles Freeman as National Intelligence Council (NIC) chairman has caused a stir in many circles, not least among China/Taiwan watchers. Freeman, John Chait warned in the Washington Post, is from the "realist school" and would drop friends like Israel or Taiwan if it were in the US' interest. ... But Chait, and the many Zionist

organizations who have criticized Freeman's appointment, overstate the impact he would have on foreign policy. Part of their mistake is to assume that governments speak in one voice, as if the Obama administration would be homogeneously realist. ... Despite Freeman's appointment to the NIC, it is unlikely the US will abandon Israel for the sake of its own 'interest,' because the US foreign policy establishment is a plurality of voices. ...

"The same applies to Obama's Asia team. For one, a purely realist administration would not have tapped Harvard University professor Joseph Nye, the high priest of 'soft power,' as ambassador to Japan. In other words, despite Freeman's positions on Taiwan and China - which are indeed worrying - others in the US government will counterbalance him. The NIC is but one of many government bodies involved in US foreign policy. It is not even the most powerful one, as demonstrated by the lack of traction that its principal product, the National Intelligence Estimate, has had in the White House under previous administrations. It is too early, therefore, to be overly alarmed by the appointment."

YOUNG